

**ADIRONDACK CENTRAL SCHOOL
BOONVILLE ELEMENTARY
BOONVILLE, NY 13309**

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES – March 25, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT	OTHERS PRESENT
John Abdo - President Richard Gallo – Vice-President Sandra Beasock Mark Emery Michael Kramer Doug Muha Almanda Sturtevant	Edward Niznik, Superintendent, Sharon Cihocki, Business Administrator, Michelle Freeman, District Clerk, Jill Rowlands-Will, MS Principal; Linda Guernsey, Director of Curriculum; Dan Roberts; Asst. HS Principal, Brian Maneen, Transportation Supervisor; Wendy Keehfus-Jones, BE Principal; Jill Schafer, WL Principal; Roy Johnson, Marianne Johnson, Rebecca Pisani, Shannon Brach, Shannon Johnson, Gene Peck, Mark Joslin, Sandra Joslin, Joseph Kirk, Kelly Hoehn, Josh Kirk, Charles Scott, Tracy Northrup, Tyler Terry, Darlene DeFazio, Lori Lee, Kendra Hopsicker, Jill Hoke, Michelle Lisowski, TJ Lisowski, Joseph Combs, Mary Healt, Joseph Healt, Jessica Petrusis, Charles Rogan, Samantha Krantz, Miriam Doud, Erica & Kyle Ready, Amanda Jasek, Linda Smith, Rod Smith, Bruce Brach, Amy Weaver, Cheri Pulquerio, Melissa Miller, Jackie Layton
<u>MEMBERS EXCUSED:</u>	

At 6:00 p.m. Mr. Abdo, President, called the meeting to order.

Mr. Kramer moved and Mr. Muha seconded; carried 7-0; to go into executive session to discuss the employment history of particular personnel. Mr. Niznik was appointed Clerk Pro-Tem in the absence of the District Clerk.

Board members returned from executive session at 7:03 p.m. Mr. Emery moved and Mrs. Beasock seconded, carried 7-0; to go to regular session.

At 7:05 p.m. Mr. Abdo led the recitation of the pledge of allegiance.

PRESIDENT’S MOMENT:

Mr. Abdo thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and read the following statement:

The Adirondack Central School is currently facing a deficit of approximately \$620,000. During the budget process, all aspects of costs are looked at. The Board is faced with the very difficult task of balancing student need with being fiscally responsible. At all times the Board considers the needs of all of our 1228 students. These students range from our elementary students having their first school experience to seniors who are about to leave us and embark on the rest of their lives. In no way do we take that responsibility lightly.

Although we would like to give our students the best of everything, we have to consider our fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of our district. Adirondack is a small rural district whose student enrollment is 55% free and reduced. Being cognizant of this, we try to keep the tax levy reasonable.

With that being said, the discussion of whether or not to close Forestport has been going on since the 1990’s. The decision that will be made will take all concerns into consideration.

At this time we will hear your concerns. Any questions we can answer we will do so. If we do not have an answer we will get back to you.

Please limit your comments to three minutes and try not to repeat comments already stated.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Amy Weaver – spokesperson for Forestport community thanked the Board for holding this forum. It is very important for them to voice their concerns. It is a hard reality that this may be the best for the District. There will be no support without a thorough comprehensive review and if standards and laws are not followed to close a building. She referred to a 12-page document she submitted to the Board through e-mail.

School Law recommends the Board form a committee when closing a building, did the Board ever consider forming such committee? Mr. Abdo stated the Board did not form a committee, it is a recommendation, but is not a requirement to close a building.

As far as options, what other options were given to the Board? Mrs. Cihocki stated reductions in staff positions, cuts to programs, cuts to HS/MS ELA, Math and Social Studies which will increase class sizes at that level.

What is the approval process for large class sizes? Mr. Niznik stated if the number of students exceeds 28 in a class, historically the Board has split the class.

What about the afterschool programs currently at Forestport, will they be dissolved? Mr. Niznik stated he believes Boonville Elementary has the same afterschool programs, i.e. Makerspace, skiing, so students would be a part of those programs.

Transportation is an issue, the length of the bus ride. Echo Lake and Dean Roads are a concern. How safe are the roads? How many more students will have to travel on these roads? Mrs. Cihocki said she could get that number.

They heard Birnie Bus Service would be used? The Board answered that is news to them.

There are gaps in the census that doesn't account for the pregnancies in the community and people moving into Forestport.

How many students from Forestport are registered for Pre-K next year? Mr. Niznik stated four (4) confirmed.

It will be a big adjustment for the teachers who will be switched to a new grade level. The Board stated teachers are switched to different grade levels quite often.

There are staffing concerns such as losing a nurse. With the increased number of students at Boonville Elementary and increased mental health and holistic health needs, who would be liable if an incident occurs with losing a nurse? Mrs. Cihocki explained another full-time school counselor was added to Boonville Elementary this school year to tend to the increased mental health issues.

It is a concern that the Board is missing deadlines put forth by State Ed. for closing a building. State Ed has an outline for a reason. The whole community has a voice. Children's lives are at stake. This is not a decision to be made in a month and a half.

Does Boonville Elementary have adequate room for these incoming students? Mr. Niznik stated yes and referred back to his presentation from March 12th.

Is the Board aware of the asbestos tiles at Boonville Elementary? Mrs. Cihocki stated they are well-aware and asbestos testing is done on an annual basis.

The District's Shared Decision Making Plan, how has it not been looked at since 2010, it is supposed to be looked at every 2 years as required? What will happen to Forestport home values if the school is closed? There are neighboring school districts who would welcome Forestport students, has the Board looked at that?

Forestport parents are very distraught over the possibility of closing Forestport Elementary. There are over 600 signatures from concerned Forestport citizens who want to know that this is the right decision.

Bruce Brach - told the Board he appreciates this opportunity for Forestport community members to speak. At the end of the day this is a financial thing, not an educational thing. Call it what it is. Is it true we have \$6.8 million in Reserves? Mrs. Cihocki stated that was taken from the audit of June 30, 2018. How many years are we bonding the capital project that was approved last year? Mrs. Cihocki said she would have to look that up. What is the interest rate? Mrs. Cihocki stated interest rates depend on the market.

Mr. Brach stated he was going home to look through his 1989 yearbook to count how many teachers were here and how many students were enrolled then. He feels we have less students, but more teachers than in 1989. He stated there is room in the Budget to not close Forestport this year. People want to go about it the right way. Let's get through another year and make it a decision for 2020-2021.

Darlene DeFazio – If Forestport Elementary is closed will the Board be moving offices there and have to maintain the building as offices? Mr. Niznik replied no.

Public Forum ended at 8:15 p.m.

At 8:16 p.m. Mrs. Beasock moved and Mr. Muha seconded, carried 7-0; to go into executive session to discuss the employment history of particular personnel.

Michelle Freeman, District Clerk

Board members returned from executive session at 10:19 p.m. Mr. Gallo moved and Mr. Beasock seconded; carried 7-0, to go into regular session.

At 10:20 p.m. Mr. Beasock moved and Mr. Emery seconded, carried 7-0; the Board adjourned to the Special Meeting to be held on Tuesday, March 26, 2019 in the Boonville Elementary cafeteria at 7:00 p.m.

Edward S. Niznik, Clerk Pro-Tem